

Alias 'Roy Gault's Favourite Perfin'.

There are other ways of establishing reliable identities than waiting patiently for perfin covers to turn up complete with the name of the user on the flap. As long ago as 13th March 1959 an article appeared in 'Stamp Collecting' entitled "Detective Work in Philately - Clues Submitted by D. J. Muggleton, Solutions by J. S. Nelson". Written by Derrick, the article described the ways in which he and I had co-operated to seek out identities mainly from small scraps of printed postcards to which perfins were attached.

Over the years I have maintained my interest in this type of 'detective work' and have assembled a modest library of trade directories and other reference works to assist me. My most recent acquisition was an 1891 edition of Jepson's Mercantile Directory and Manufacturers Guide and I noticed quite by chance that the section on Nottingham included firms in Beeston.

Recalling the item in the Bulletin concerning the Fancy Framed H/&C°/Ld die with Beeston postmarks I decided, in the absence of an alphabetical list, to trawl through the whole of the Nottingham section to see if any possible identities came up. The only one was HUMBER & Co. LIMITED, Bicycle and Tricycle manufacturers, Beeston.

It then occurred to me that if the die was theirs it might perhaps be a representation of the design which used to appear on the little metal nameplates which they fixed to the front of their bicycle frames. Being unable to find any book of illustrations of cycle makers' nameplates in any reference library, I decided to confide my suspicions in Roy Gault.

Roy is not a man to let grass grow under his feet. In less than a week he had done all the legwork and had written to confirm that he had added another confirmed identity to the catalogue.

His research had taken him to Coventry Records Office and then to the Local History Section of the Public Library where he had found a book entitled 'The Humber Story 1868-1932' by A. B. Demaus and J. C. Tarring. In the book were illustrations of the various Humber Transfer Designs of which our Fancy Framed perfin die was unquestionably a representation.

Some brief details of further information supplied by Roy may be of interest. Thomas Humber, born at Sheffield 16th October 1841, began as an assistant to a blacksmith and wheelwright in Nottingham and progressed to become a manufacturer of bicycles and tricycles at Beeston from about 1868. He was joined by partners from 1875 and in 1885 the name Humber & Co. Limited was first registered. Humber himself retired in 1892. Before 1900 Humber cycles were being made at Wolverhampton and Coventry as well as Beeston and there were various Overseas Subsidiaries in European countries and the U.S.A. They had also by this time moved into the manufacturing of motor cycles and cars and Humber Limited, first formed in 1900, later became part of The Rootes Group.

As for the perfin, the prevalence of poor strikes suggests the Company had its own perforator. The die has so far been recorded on the Penny Lilac and on the ½d orange, 2½d and 3d Q.V. Jubilees. The only postmark noted is BEESTON, NOTTS but others such as Coventry and Wolverhampton may exist. Would members able to contribute any further information please send this to Roy Gault or myself, John Nelson.



Beeston Make

